

Record Year for Whooping Crane Survey

A preliminary U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service analysis of aerial surveys indicates that 329 whooping cranes, including 38 juveniles, are in the primary survey area (approximately 153,200 acres) centered on Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near Austwell, TX. The Aransas-Wood Buffalo whooping crane population is the only surviving wild population of whooping cranes in the world.

At least nine birds were noted outside the primary survey area. The survey shows an upward trend in whooping crane abundance over the last five years. Last year, 308 whooping cranes were estimated in the primary survey area.

“This is the highest survey estimate ever documented for this population of whooping cranes,” said Wade Harrell, U.S. Whooping Crane Recovery Coordinator. “We are thrilled to see that these birds continue to increase in number after being so close to extinction only 75 years ago.”

Whooping cranes are one of the rarest birds in North America and are highly endangered. Cranes can survive more than 25 years in the wild. Adults generally reach reproductive age at four or five years, and then lay two eggs, usually rearing only one chick.

For more information about the survey and whooping cranes, go to the Aransas Refuge website, <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/Aransas/>.